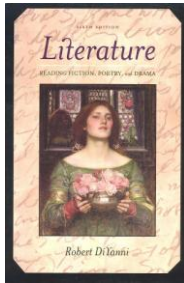


The Elements of Poetry



The Elements of Poetry

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|---------------------|-------------|
| • Voice | • Syntax |
| • Diction | • Sound |
| • Imagery | • Metre |
| • Figures of Speech | • Structure |
| • Symbolism | • Theme |

Voice

- When we read a poem, we perceive the *voice* of a speaker.
- This voice conveys *tone*, the poem's implied attitude towards its subject.
- We extrapolate the tone of a poem by interpreting the details of the poem's language
- For example, compare Wyatt and Surrey.

Diction

- *Diction* refers to the poet's choice of words in a poem.
 - *Denotative diction* refers to a poet's use of dictionary definitions of words.
 - *Connotative diction* refers to a poet's use of words that have more personal or suggestive meanings.
- For example, see Wordsworth's "I wandered lonely as a cloud."

Imagery

- An *image* is a representation of a sensory impression, feeling, or idea.
- *Imagery* refers to a pattern of related images in a poem.
- Imagery is often symbolic or metaphorical, in that it conveys meaning beyond the literal.
- For example, see Wyatt and Surrey.

Figures of Speech

- When a poet uses language *figuratively* rather than *literally*, he or she means something other than the actual, denotative meanings of his or her words.
- A poet often uses *figures of speech* to indicate he or she is using language in a *figurative* and not a *literal* way.

Figures of Speech

- Some examples of figures of speech:
 - Hyperbole: an overstatement.
 - Litotes: an understatement.
 - Synecdoche: using a part to signify a whole.
 - Metonymy: substituting an attribute for a thing.
 - Personification: imbuing with human traits.
 - Metaphor: a comparison without “like” or “as.”
 - Simile: a comparison with “like” or “as.”

Symbolism

- A *symbol* is an object or action that represents something beyond itself.
- *Symbolism* is the use of symbols or symbolic systems in a piece of writing.
- Related to symbolism, *allegory* is a narrative form in which people, places, and happenings have interrelated correspondences.
- For example, see Donne.

Syntax

- *Syntax* is the arrangement of words in a sentence, phrase, or clause.
- It is the overall grammatical structure of a piece of writing.
- *Syntax* comprises word order, line lengths, sentence structure, sentence type (declarative, interrogative, imperative).
- See Wordsworth’s “Expostulation and Reply.”

Sound

- The way we perceive a poem aurally.
 - Rhyme: the matching of final vowel or consonant sounds in two or more words.
 - End rhyme: rhyming sounds at the ends of lines.
 - Internal rhyme: rhyming sounds within lines.
 - Perfect rhyme: exact rhyming sounds.
 - Imperfect rhyme: approximate rhyming sounds.
 - Feminine rhyme: rhyme with unstressed final syllable.
 - Masculine rhyme: rhyme with stressed final syllable.

Sound

- The way we perceive a poem aurally.
 - Alliteration: repetition of consonant sounds, especially at the beginning of words.
 - Assonance: repetition of vowel sounds.

Metre

- *Metre* refers to the *rhythm*, or the regular, patterned recurrence of accents or stresses in a poem or song.
- *Metre* is made up of both stressed (/) and unstressed (x) syllables.
- The basic unit of metre is the *foot*, a combination of stressed and unstressed syllables.

Metre

Type	Foot	Stresses	Example
Rising	iamb iambic	x /	x / pre vent
	anapest anapestic	x x /	x x / comp re hend
Falling	trochee trochaic	/ x	/ x foot ball
	dactyl dactylic	/ x x	/ x x cheer ful ly
Substitute	spondee spondaic	//	/ / knick knack
	pyrrhic pyrrhic	x x	x x of the

Metre

Number of Feet	Name of Metre
One foot	monometre
Two feet	dimetre
Three feet	trimetre
Four feet	tetrametre
Five feet	pentametre
Six feet	hexametre
Seven feet	heptametre
Eight feet	octametre

Metre

x / x / x / x / x /
 But she that taught me love and suffer pain,
 x / x / x / x / x /
 My doubtful hope and eke my hot desire
 x / x / x / x / x /
 With shamefast look to shadow and refrain,
 x / x / x / x / x /
 Her smiling grace converteth straight to ire.

Metre

- *Metrical variation* occurs when the poet makes a brief departure from regular metre.
- *Metrical variation* serves to emphasize the word or phrase that is metrically varied.

/ x x / x / x / x /
 Love that doth reign and live within my thought,

Structure

- *Structure* refers to a poem's patterns of organization, or its form.
 - Closed forms: Poems with a fixed or strictly constrained form.
 - sonnet, ballad, limerick, etc.
 - Open forms: Poems with an unfixed or free form.
 - Free verse, concrete poetry, etc.

Theme

- A poem's *theme* is its main idea, the intellectually apprehensible meaning inherent or implicit within the poem.
- The reader must consider all the elements of poetry to discover a poem's theme.
- A poem can have more than one theme, depending on who is interpreting it.